

Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP) Final Performance Report

The final performance report summarizes the outcome of your LFPP award objectives. As stated in the LFPP Terms and Conditions, you will not be eligible for future LFPP or Farmers Market Promotion Program grant funding unless all close-out procedures are completed, including satisfactory submission of this final performance report.

This final report will be made available to the public once it is approved by LFPP staff. Write the report in a way that promotes your project's accomplishments, as this document will serve as not only a learning tool, but a promotional tool to support local and regional food programs. Particularly, recipients are expected to provide both qualitative and quantitative results to convey the activities and accomplishments of the work.

The report is limited to 10 pages and is due **within 90 days** of the project's performance period end date, or sooner if the project is complete. Provide answers to each question, or answer "not applicable" where necessary. It is recommended that you email or fax your completed performance report to LFPP staff to avoid delays:

LFPP Phone: 202-720-2731; Email: USDALFPPQuestions@ams.usda.gov; Fax: 202-720-0300

Should you need to mail your documents via hard copy, contact LFPP staff to obtain mailing instructions.

Report Date Range: (e.g. September 30, 20XX-September 29, 20XX)	September 30, 2014 – May 30, 2015
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Recipient Organization Name:	City of Elgin
Project Title as Stated on Grant Agreement:	Elgin Texas Local Food Processing Business Plan
Grant Agreement Number: (e.g. 14-LFPPX-XX-XXXX)	14-LFPPX-TX-0160
Year Grant was Awarded:	2014
Project City/State:	Elgin/Texas
Total Awarded Budget:	\$24,750 Federal, \$9,800 Match

LFPP staff may contact you to follow up for long-term success stories. Who may we contact?

- ☐ Same Authorized Representative listed above (check if applicable).
- ☒ Different individual: Name: Sue Beckwith; Email: sbeckwith@ci.elgin.tx.us; Phone: 512-496-1244

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1. State the goals/objectives of your project as outlined in the grant narrative and/or approved by LFPP staff. If the goals/objectives from the narrative have changed from the grant narrative, please highlight those changes (e.g. “new objective”, “new contact”, “new consultant”, etc.). You may add additional goals/objectives if necessary. For each item below, qualitatively discuss the progress made and indicate the impact on the community, if any.
 - i. Goal/Objective 1: Establish appropriate scale and scope of the regional processing center to (i) increase the capacity to support new market opportunities for farm and ranch operations in Central Texas, (ii) increase production of Texas grown agricultural products, (iii) increase the level of access to locally and regionally grown fruits and vegetables by our lowest income residents, and (iv) create quality local jobs.
 - a. Progress Made: Working with Dr. Rodney Holcomb of Oklahoma State University, we completed the business plan for the processing center. We determined that a small scale of 2,000 sq. ft. is sufficient to process the volume of fruits and vegetables farmers expect to harvest for processing. We anticipate processing output of 150 cases/day. The farmers found this to be a modest yet reachable scale to meet their needs. The scope of the processing center will focus on copacking and technical assistance services for farmers and food entrepreneurs. The business model of the center is to sell value-added processing as a service for a modest profit and to sell/provide technical assistance services at a break even, not for profit level. Primary customers will be (i) farmers who will pay the center to process (copack) their crops and sell the processed, shelf-stable product through new and existing markets and (ii) food entrepreneurs who will rent the shared facility and/or pay for copacking services, preferably using locally grown ingredients. The value proposition for customers is that they will increase their gross revenue by creating processed products from their excess or low revenue crops at a cost-of-goods-sold lower than the processed products’ sale price (our definition of added value).

We held 4 workshops with 37 farmers to determine demand from farmers for the value-added processing center and found high demand and great interest. Farmers shared harvest data and the project team assembled a good inventory of the fruit and vegetable supply potentially available for processing. We held three (3) workshops in Elgin and one (1) in Waller County, Texas. Waller County USDA staff and Prairie View Texas A&M helped us get the word out and we had 10 farmers in attendance in Waller County, a USDA Strikeforce county. Two of the Elgin workshops were intended for farmers earning less than 50% of their household income from farming and one workshop was for farmers earning 50% or more of household income from farming.

We interviewed wholesale buyers and food entrepreneurs including the University of Texas, Wheatville Food Co-op, Farmhouse Delivery and Stellar Gourmet. Interest was high for a value-added processing center and we observed a clear willingness to participate in the development process. For example, the University of Texas is interested in purchasing dehydrated herbs and cut squash from farmers; Wheatville Food Co-op encouraged us to pursue fermented and dehydrated products. Farmhouse is interested in renting the facility, as is Stellar Gourmet.

We found the short-term (1 year) supply to be too low and seasonally driven to keep the center operating year round, so we’ll need to start small. Once the center is up and running, farmers will increase production specifically for value-added processing and, with proper

storage, there will be enough supply to process year-round. Of course, the scale of the equipment determines our maximum throughput on a daily basis, so sizing equipment is key for optimal efficiency; in other words, with high capacity equipment we could process higher volumes but that high capacity may be excessive for our needs. Our plan is based on the experience of existing processing centers and determines the optimal scale for efficient production based on our expected supply from Central Texas farmers within a 100 mile radius of Elgin, Texas.

We learned that a significant gap in our regional food system is the lack of an effective communication mechanism among farmers and food entrepreneurs (and other wholesale buyers). Results of interviews with potential customers support the strategy of bridging this gap with technical assistance for farmers and food entrepreneurs. Evidence of this gap was clear at a workshop for food entrepreneurs on ingredients and labeling attended by our project manager. Of the four (4) ingredients vendors present, not one sourced from local farmers. The general thinking seems to be that local ingredients are too expensive or the supply too low for food entrepreneurs. This is not unusual across the country. The Starting Block in Hart, Michigan and the Piedmont Food Processing Center outside Raleigh both report that very few of their clients use local ingredients. Our plan is to attract and serve the food entrepreneurs who are interested in using locally grown ingredients. By bringing together food entrepreneurs and farmers in a technical assistance and/or meet-and-greet format, our project team believes we can customize our processing product line to maximize revenue for both farmers and food entrepreneurs. For example, farmers and food entrepreneurs may collaborate to design recipes and value-added products that improve the bottom line for both the farmer and the buyer. Clear incentives exist to use local ingredients; our local food co-op estimates that a “local” branded item may bring as much as a 20% price premium compared to one not branded as “local”.

- b. Impact on Community: The business plan concluded that the Elgin Processing Center will expand new market opportunities and increase production of Texas grown agricultural products. One of our lead farmers has seen an increase in gross revenue of 20% annually since they began processing their excess (they process it themselves in their on-farm kitchen). In a shared facility with paid staff, transportation costs and higher overhead, we expect farmers to see a mean increase in gross revenue of 10%. Note that gross revenue is not optimal for measuring the impact of value-added processing on farmers’ income as many variables affect the bottom line of each farm. Research is needed to identify the best metric to evaluate the impact of value-added processing on farmer net income.
- ii. Goal/Objective 2: Establish the necessary business and facility characteristics and conditions to support financial viability of the processing center (e.g. types of processing supported, customer base for processing, market demand for processed products, input/ingredient supply, form of business, ownership, physical infrastructure, etc.).
 - a. Progress Made: We met with farmers to determine what crops and volume they need to process and during which months or seasons. We interviewed potential buyers to understand the demand. Then we identified the facility and business to meet these needs. Our lead farmers, Tecolote Farm, Green Gate Farms and Bernhardt’s Farm along with the 34 other farms participating in workshops provided harvest data by month. This data resulted in our determination that farmers’ greatest need for processing excess during spring/summer (in Texas that is May-June) is tomatoes and squash and in fall (in Texas,

Sept-Dec) it is squash and eggplant. With Dr. Holcomb, we determined our priority types of processing to be canning and dehydrating with fermenting as a third priority.

Market demand for locally grown and processed products is strong although the higher price is a potential constraint. We determined that our plan should be to copack for farmers so they can sell shelf stable products in existing CSA's and markets while they develop new markets and build relationships in the wholesale arena. The higher rate of return from direct sales will enable farmers to process their excess in the short term as food hubs and other new markets develop regionally.

With the Texas Rural Cooperative Center at the University of Texas Pan American, we explored forms of business and organizational structure. While a cooperative was at first appealing, the fact is that farmers aren't sure they have the time available to run the center as a co-op. The center is currently planned as a non-profit educational organization and may become an LLC or possibly a co-op in the future. Technical assistance services will be provided in partnership with the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (TOFGA), a non-profit organization. Our business plan was written to plan an LLC and shows profitably after 5 years.

The facility will be about 2,000 square feet with potential to grow to 5,000 and be equipped with three-phase electric and commercial scale municipal water, wastewater and gas. Ample space and infrastructure around the building is required to meet environmental goals that, as noted below (objective 4), include water recovery and composting.

b. Impact on Community: The impact on the community as a result of this planning process has been extremely positive. Our planning process has brought together farmers, many of whom met each other for the first time. While some farmers are skeptical that value-added processing will bring them the revenue they require, all are willing to remain at the table to develop the Center. Buyers are eager to purchase locally processed products and participate in the development and growth of this center, among them the University of Texas Dining Services, Wheatsville Food Coop, Farmhouse Delivery and Stellar Gourmet. Strong relationships are often key to success and our planning process has resulted in a core of interested parties representing key aspects of a robust food system and bodes well for increasing impact over the long-term. Although our impact is qualitative, it is nonetheless palpable; we have begun a serious and realistic dialogue about value-added processing in central Texas and we have a specific business plan to build it. It is the relationships that will help us overcome barriers: logistical, financial and temporal.

iii. Goal/Objective 3: Assess the economic impact on the local and regional economy including direct, indirect and induced economic activity (e.g. farmer net income, local jobs, food access to low income residents, property and sales tax, existing business impact, etc.).

a. Progress Made: Dr. Rebekka Dudensing of Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension prepared the economic impact analysis based on business plan data provided by Dr. Rodney Holcomb of Oklahoma State. The results of her analysis are in section b below, 'Impact on Community'. Few farmers are currently processing their excess crops and even fewer are growing for value-added processing. One lead farmer shared their success with value-added processing during the farmer workshop in Elgin. This farm saw an increase of 20% in annual gross sales from value-added products. Their model is to process excess in their on-

farm kitchen and sell through their direct market outlets. Our partner working with lower income families is Advocacy Outreach of Elgin. As part of our planning process, Advocacy Outreach took a tour of Coyote Creek Farm and Organic Feed Mill. Thirty (30) families participated in the tour and interest was so high that Advocacy Outreach is now including local food in their family health education program. The Elgin Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Board of Directors is a strong supporter of this project and helped identify services, such as rental, to enable the center to provide year round jobs.

- b. Impact on Community: The direct value of value added processing sales is not the only benefit to the local, regional, and state economies. Economic activity by the processing industry ripples through the economy as firms purchase inputs and pay employees who also make regional purchases. Many production expenses are paid to local suppliers. Processing facility employees, farmers, and the employees of farmers and other suppliers also spend part of their wages and profits within the region - eating at local restaurants and buying groceries, clothing and movie tickets. In turn, the employees of these businesses purchase supplies and spend wages at local businesses. Money is multiplied as it circulates through the economy. Of course, money also leaks from the regional economy as firms and households purchase goods and services from other parts of the state, nation, and world. These leakages reduce the overall economic contribution of agricultural production, and the leakages are greater for the smaller Bastrop County economy than for the larger state economy.

The 2013 IMPLAN data were modified to reflect the expected purchasing patterns of the proposed facility and calculate economic impacts within the Bastrop County, Austin-Round Rock metropolitan statistical area, and the state of Texas. The total effects are reported for output (gross sales), total value added (contribution to gross regional product), labor income, and employment. In the first year, \$931,000 in direct sales leads to a total county-level economic output of \$1.26 million and 15 full- and part-time jobs annually. This total impact includes a \$338,500 contribution to gross regional product and a \$227,500 contribution to labor income across the region. Impacts are greater at the metropolitan area and state levels.

Farmer net income is subject to many variables and as we'll discuss in the 'Lessons Learned' section, it is not the best measure of successful value-added processing for farmers. As stated earlier in this report, we expect farmers to see a mean increase in *gross* revenue of 10%. For lower income residents, we expect to see a positive impact and although that impact may be more related to health than to economic benefit, the center will stimulate local food entrepreneurship and specific outreach to lower income families may result in some families creating their own branded value-added product.

- iv. Goal/Objective 4: Identify expected environmental impact of the processing facility and the related activities such as farmer delivery of ingredients, distribution and employee commute (e.g. water and wastewater, waste stream management, electricity sources, soil health impact, carbon footprint, air quality, etc).
 - a. Progress Made: Our progress on this objective is oriented to design and functional requirements. Environmental impacts are largely controllable through design features. For example, water recovery is an essential function and a preferred site will include outdoor space for gardens using graywater. It's doubtful that rainwater use will be cost-effective for

use in food processing so harvested rainwater may be used for supplemental watering of outdoor landscapes. Our business plan was developed based on commercial utility use for water, wastewater, electricity and gas. The lead farmers are committed to more sustainable energy sources and, as budgets permit, will include solar hot water heating and grid-connected solar power. Our design will include low waste strategies including space for composting. We are fortunate to be near Austin where there is significant expertise and support for compost pickup and zero-waste strategies.

b. Impact on Community: Our project is seen by many as an opportunity to integrate local food enterprise with broader sustainable and environmentally sound practice. Although we don't know if we will build a new building or use an existing one, the farmers leading this project are committed to minimizing our environmental footprint. For example, farmers in Waller County pointed out that they already send someone monthly the 80 miles to get organic feed at Coyote Creek Feed Mill in Elgin and suggested that same driver could drop off crops to be processed and post-processing pickup could be arranged either later that same day or (with storage) the following month. The impact of this planning project is that thinking in terms of low environmental impact was catalyzed and the beginnings of relationships were formed with those working on zero waste and composting.

2. Quantify the overall impact of the project on the intended beneficiaries, if applicable, from the baseline date (the start of the award performance period, September 30, 2014). Include further explanation if necessary.

Because ours was a planning project, there is no long-term job creation nor were markets directly expanded. However the process of meeting, interviewing and discussing possibilities of processing has laid the groundwork for opening new markets in the future.

- i. Number of direct jobs created: 1 part-time job during the planning project
- ii. Number of jobs retained: 0
- iii. Number of indirect jobs created: 0
- iv. Number of markets expanded: 0
- v. Number of new markets established: 0
- vi. Market sales increased by \$0 and increased by 0%.
- vii. Number of farmers/producers that have benefited from the project: 37

a. Percent Increase: Not applicable

3. Did you expand your customer base by reaching new populations such as new ethnic groups, additional low income/low access populations, new businesses, etc.? If so, how?

The customer base of this planning project consisted of new populations whose input we sought regarding the farmers' vision for processing of local crops. This planning project enabled us to expand the customer base significantly with Elgin area community and business leaders as well as the 30 lower income families served by Advocacy Outreach of Elgin. Drs. Holcomb and Dudensing came to Elgin for two days of work sessions with our project team. Two of the work sessions took place over lunch at Elgin Local Goods (local products grocery store and cafe). The first luncheon was hosted by the Elgin Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and attended by the President of Elgin Prosperity Bank, President of the Elgin Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director of the Elgin EDC and the Elgin Community Development Director. The second lunch work session included the Mayor of Elgin and our partners from the Texas office of the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT).

The impact of these lunch work sessions was to educate and earn the commitment of local business and community leaders. The Elgin EDC is keenly interested in this project and yet it is true that including local food enterprise as part of Elgin economic development strategy is a new concept and there is reasonable skepticism. These lunch meetings brought together our academic researchers with Elgin's pragmatic business and policy leaders. Both parties came away with a clearer understanding of the economic leverage local food enterprise can create for Elgin. Business leaders asked insightful questions and the group explored possible outcomes in a productive, positive manner. These work sessions were key to our successful planning process.

Lower income families participating in the family literacy program at Advocacy Outreach took a tour of Elgin's Coyote Creek Organic Feed Mill, home to 10,000 pastured organic hens at Jeremiah Cunningham's World's Best Eggs. As part of our planning process, Advocacy Outreach wanted to try this tour to explore including local food in the healthy literacy curriculum. The tour was a huge success (see attached newspaper article) and was followed up with learning modules on how laying hens are raised and where eggs come from. Although our project focuses on vegetables, using "the egg" as a gateway topic to local food education served to engage parents and children alike. Advocacy Outreach is a strong and capable partner and is eager to recruit their clients to create local food products and perhaps start their own small food businesses once the processing center is built.

4. Discuss your community partnerships.
 - i. Who are your community partners? Advocacy Outreach, Elgin Economic Development Corporation, Elgin Chamber of Commerce, Southside Market, River Valley Farmers Market, Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (TOFGA), Bernhardt's Fruit and Veggie Farm, Green Gate Farms, Tecolote Farm, Elgin Independent School District, Sustainable Food Center, City of Austin Office of Sustainability, Moontower Agricultural Co-op, Waller County Farmers' and Ranchers' Co-op, Prairie View A&M University Extension, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas Rural Cooperative Center at the University of Texas Pan American, National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) and Oklahoma State University Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center.
 - ii. How have they contributed to the overall results of the LFPP project?

Our partners are the core of this project and essential to our success. Each has contributed their time, resources and thoughtful insight. Texas A&M AgriLife has contributed economic modeling that provides important bottom line results so important to Elgin area business leaders. Advocacy Outreach has led outreach to lower income families. TOFGA and NCAT have shared resources and helped with outreach. NCAT in particular has shared their national perspective and provided introductions to people and organizations working on value-added processing. The engineers at Oklahoma State shared their designs for a cost-effective dehydrator that will reduce our processing cost. Prairie View A&M and Waller County USDA Extension shared announcements and provided facilities for our Waller County farmer workshop.
 - iii. How will they continue to contribute to your project's future activities, beyond the performance period of this LFPP grant?

Our partners will become even stronger assets during implementation of the Elgin Processing Center. In addition to continuing to provide resources, time and shared contacts

partners will contribute more specifically, especially to technical assistance. For example, TOFGA has agreed to join our implementation lead team enabling us to seek funding from private foundations involving a broader segment of the community. NCAT will recommend presenters and facilitators for technical assistance sessions. Advocacy Outreach of Elgin will share their strength in reaching out to the community of lower income families and will facilitate workshops on entrepreneurship to encourage new local food businesses.

5. Are you using contractors to conduct the work? If so, how did their work contribute to the results of the LFPP project? Yes. Dr. Rodney Holcomb of Oklahoma State University applied his extensive and varied experienced developing value-added processing facilities to develop our business plan. Susan Beckwith, our project manager, managed the overall project including work sessions, logistics, strategies, communications and administration.
6. Have you publicized any results yet?* Yes.
 - i. If yes, how did you publicize the results? We emailed the business plan to our partners and others including the University of Texas PanAm Cooperative Development Center. We have received positive and affirming feedback from most partners. We await responses from some. As the project progressed, we sent media releases to the local Elgin newspaper, the Elgin Courier and have posted about the project on social media and the Elgin Local Food Network. This project will continue and we will continue to publicize the project broadly. We will present the project at the 2016 Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (TOFGA) conference. NCAT and TOFGA will include project information in their newsletters.
 - ii. To whom did you publicize the results? Elgin's citizens and business community, central Texas sustainable farming community through the mailings lists of TOFGA and the Central Texas Growers Alliance (Gro-ACT).
 - iii. How many stakeholders (i.e. people, entities) did you reach? We directly reached at least 50 farmers, 1,000 local Elgin citizens and about 300 using social media.
7. Have you collected any feedback from your community and additional stakeholders about your work? Yes.
 - i. If so, how did you collect the information? We surveyed participants of all workshops.
 - ii. What feedback was relayed (specific comments)? Very positive.

Question of Workshop Participants	Agree or Strongly Agree
The workshop was well organized.	100%
The workshop was a good use of my time.	93%
I'm interested in local processing of my farm's crops.	81%
The workshop helped me understand the opportunities and need for processing of local food.	100%
Value added will help increase my net income from farming.	75%
The workshop moved our region closer to our goal of increasing farmer net income.	87%

Other feedback is qualitative and consists of comments from Elgin business and community leaders. Example from Bryan Bracewell, EDC Board member and CEO of Southside Market, one of Elgin's oldest businesses, "This project is important and I see it

as strengthening the Elgin brand as a center of local food activity.” Other local, regional and state leaders have shared that Elgin has the potential to develop as a center of local food enterprise. The fact that our partners speak excitedly of the project is a testament to their interest, passion and commitment. We have created a very positive “buzz”.

8. Budget Summary:

- i. As part of the LFPP closeout procedures, you are required to submit the SF-425 (Final Federal Financial Report). Check here if you have completed the SF-425 and are submitting it with this report: ☒
- ii. Did the project generate any income? No
 - a. If yes, how much was generated and how was it used to further the objectives of the award? N/A

9. Lessons Learned:

- i. Summarize any lessons learned. They should draw on positive experiences (e.g. good ideas that improved project efficiency or saved money) and negative experiences (e.g. what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

Positive: (i) Trust is key when asking farmers about money and privacy is critical. Our project manager, Sue Beckwith is a former farmer and is trusted by the lead farmers in this planning project. (ii) Hold workshops for full time farmers separate from part-time farmers. Marketing issues and emphasis on crop planning vary between these two groups and full time farmers will be more comfortable if in separate groups; meetings will be more effective. (iii) Keep policy and community leaders informed, even if just a brief update. Remember the project development process hinges on first listening, then supporting and finally believing. (iv) Find experienced experts. Dr. Rodney Holcomb has developed many processing facilities and our plan was more comprehensive because he knew the questions to ask and how to assess the responses. Dr. Rebekka Dudensing of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is experienced in economic modeling and community development; her knowledge was key to understanding the needs of a small rural city in tandem with the needs of family farmers.

Negative: (i) Farmers have no time for meetings during November or December and March through June. If you ask for their time during these periods, be respectful and provide food – they might meet over lunch. (ii) Always notify farmers before you show up at their farms; for a farm tour, our project manager told the farmer she would text when en route with the group but she forgot and that was a mistake. The tour went well but every bit of credibility matters – do what you say you’ll do. (iii) Ours was a small planning project run mostly by one person. She had two deaths in her immediate family during the project and that slowed our activities. She was able to make up lost time, but this is an inherent risk with a small team. (iv) Be sure all workshop participants complete evaluation forms even if they have to leave early. We had 37 farmers in attendance at 4 workshops but many had to leave a few minutes early and we only had 16 evaluations completed.

- ii. If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving: We achieved our goals and objectives. A challenge was how to increase food access, especially for lower income families during a planning

project. As we move to implementation, this remains a challenge and we will need to be creative to expand access for processed foods that are likely to be expensive to produce.

- iii. Describe any lessons learned in the administration of the project that might be helpful for others who would want to implement a similar project: (i) Give the AMS staff plenty of time to respond to questions. They are wonderfully attentive and are busy serving many grantees. (ii) It would help to know more clearly exactly what is required for USDA acceptance of the final report, especially as this acceptance is critical to future funding.

10. Future Work:

- i. How will you continue the work of this project beyond the performance period? In other words, how will you parlay the results of your project's work to benefit future community goals and initiatives? Include information about community impact and outreach, anticipated increases in markets and/or sales, estimated number of jobs retained/created, and any other information you'd like to share about the future of your project.

With the significant momentum generated by this USDA-AMS planning project, we are creating the Elgin Local Food Business Center (ELF Business Center). We have the support of the Elgin City Council, the Elgin Economic Development Corporation and our community partners. The Board of the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (TOFGA) has agreed to accept the ELF Business Center as a farmer-directed project under their non-profit umbrella. Through the ELF Center and as funding permits, we expect to create 30 new jobs in the Elgin area within five (5) years with a county-level economic impact of \$470,000 in gross regional product on output of \$1.7 million. *Attached please find our 1-page introduction of the ELF Business Center.*

The ELF Business Center will be a model for other Texas cities and towns by serving as a model for successfully developing local food enterprise to increase sustainable rural economic development and provide quality jobs for a robust rural economy. The Center will be developed with a focus on replication and lessons learned will be shared online.

- ii. Do you have any recommendations for future activities and, if applicable, an outline of next steps or additional research that might advance the project goals?

Additional research is needed on metrics to measure impact of value-added processing on farmers' income. We have used gross revenue as an interim metric and as we progress and the research evolves, we will measure impact at a more granular level.

In Fall, 2015, as funding permits, we plan to begin providing technical assistance using existing community facilities, webinars and conference calls. We will prototype value-added products using an existing farm kitchen and in this way will market-test specific value-added products. By Spring 2016 we will have developed our brand, marketing strategy, website and collateral marketing materials. We will expand the audience for technical assistance and hold a farmer and food entrepreneur meet and greet event. We will continue to collaborate regionally and work effectively with our partners to conduct outreach and publicize the Elgin Local Food Business Center.